

Martin Luther

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Protestant Reformation

- The term 'Protestant' comes from the *pro-test* of the Catholic Church. People who wanted reform were labeled protestants.
- The initial protestants had no intention of breaking with the Church – they merely wanted reform (hence, *reformation*). But the Church initially resisted these reforms, and excommunicated the reformers... forcing them to form their own churches.



95 Theses

- The 95 Theses were a list of 95 "issues" that Luther had with the Church.
- He pointed out some of the obvious corrupt practices of the Church – the sale of indulgences, for example. But, he also had *doctrinal* (fundamental belief) issues with the Church. These were the more serious, and more dangerous challenges.
- One of the doctrinal issues he had was with the Church's declaration that good 'works' was an integral part of salvation. Luther argued that 'faith alone', not any amount of good deeds or 'works' could save a man.
- Another major issue Luther had was that he argued that man could achieve a 'personal relationship' with God – without the assistance of a priest. This relationship could be achieved through direct prayer and through a reading of the scriptures. Thus, Luther, like Wycliffe before him, also advocated translation of the Bible into the *vernacular* (common language).



Who was Luther?

- Martin Luther was a Catholic monk living in Germany in the 1500s. He became increasingly upset with the sale of indulgences by the German priest Johann Tetzel.
- He felt that if a person could, in essence, purchase salvation, what was the purpose of faith? He also challenged that if a person could *earn* his salvation through good works, then what purpose did faith serve?
- He felt that the Catholic Church had become corrupt, and that God had called him to point out these corruptions.
- On October 31, 1517, Martin Luther posted his 95 Theses (or 95 complaints against the Catholic Church) on the door of Wittenberg Cathedral, thus starting the Protestant Reformation.



The Diet of Worms

- The Diet of Worms was *not* a new way to lose weight! A Diet, in this case, refers to a congress or assembly, and it met in the German city of Worms.
- The assembly included the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V and a council of Church elders. Luther had to explain his views. He had already been excommunicated from the Church, and now he had to answer to the highest political authority in Europe.
- When asked to retract his views, Luther responded, "I cannot and will not recant anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe... Here I stand; I can do no other. God help me."



1. Where did the term *Protestant Reformation* come from?

6. What were the 95 Theses?

7. What *practice* of the Church was criticized? What *doctrine* of the Church was criticized?

2. What did early "protesters" want? What did they receive?

8. Why did Luther advocate a translation of the Bible into the vernacular?

3. Who was Martin Luther? Why was he upset with the Church?

9. What was the Diet of Worms?

4. How did Luther believe the Church was violating the importance of faith?

10. Why was Luther called to appear before the Diet?

5. What did Luther feel led by God to do? (And what did he do?)

11. What was Luther asked to do? What was his response?

1. Where did the term *Protestant Reformation* come from?

The term 'Protestant' comes from the *protest* of the Catholic Church. People who wanted reform were labeled protestants.... And they wanted 'Reform' of the Church. Reformation.

2. What did early "protesters" want? What did they receive?

The initial protestants had no intention of breaking with the Church – they merely wanted reform. But the Church resisted these reforms, and excommunicated the reformers... forcing them to form their own churches.

3. Who was Martin Luther? Why was he upset with the Church?

Martin Luther was a Catholic monk living in Germany in the 1500s. He became increasingly upset with the sale of indulgences by the German priest Johann Tetzel.

4. How did Luther believe the Church was violating the importance of faith?

He felt the Church was suggesting salvation could be purchased (through indulgences) or earned (through good works), and thus, had eliminated the importance of faith.

5. What did Luther feel led by God to do? (And what did he do?)

Luther felt that God had called him to point out these corruptions. He posted a list of his complaints on the door of Wittenberg Cathedral.

6. What were the 95 Theses?

A list of 95 complaints against the Church.

7. What *practice* of the Church was criticized? What *doctrine* of the Church was criticized?

The sale of indulgences (practice). The issue of faith vs. works (doctrine).

8. Why did Luther advocate a translation of the Bible into the vernacular?

Luther argued that man could achieve a 'personal relationship' with God – without the assistance of a priest. This relationship could be achieved through direct prayer and through a reading of the scriptures. Thus, Luther, like Wycliffe before him, also advocated translation of the Bible into the *vernacular* (common language).

9. What was the Diet of Worms?

It was an assembly that included the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V and a council of Church elders in the German city, Worms.

10. Why was Luther called to appear before the Diet?

Luther was called upon to explain his views.

11. What was Luther asked to do? What was his response?

Luther was asked to retract his views. He said, "I cannot and will not recant anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe... Here I stand; I can do no other. God help me."

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